

Saw Shakespeare's Bones Is Affidavit Of the Trustee of Poet's Stratford House

Aged Martin Bird Swears He Was Present Thirty Years Ago When Grave Was Opened and a Lighted Candle Let Down, Revealing Perfect Skeleton.

SEXTON FOUND HUGE SKULLS NEAR TOMB.

In Some the Teeth Were More Than an Inch Long and as Hard as Stone—Marie Corelli Just Misses the Sight.

By Sophie Irene Loeb.

(Special Correspondence of The Evening World.)
STRATFORD-ON-AVON, England, Aug. 26.—To get a possible new light on the Shakespeare-Bacon controversy, I sought today the former Mayor of Stratford and a trustee of Shakespeare's home, Martin Bird.

When I asked the venerable man his views on the Shakespeare question, he answered: "Our register in the Holy Trinity Church settles the question of the birth and burial of the great poet, and I know that Shakespeare is here, for I saw his skeleton thirty years ago."

I marvelled at this, since it is asserted that the grave has never been opened. Why has it not been opened? Because they claim that there is a curse embodied in the inscription of Shakespeare's tomb purporting to have been written by the bard himself. It reads: "Good Friend, for Jesus sake forbear To dig the dust enclosed here. Blesse be ye man yt spares these stones, And curst be he yt moves my bones."

So I asked Mr. Bird: "Would you be willing to make an affidavit to that effect?"

MAKES AFFIDAVIT THAT HE SAW BONES OF POET.

He raised his gray head and answered decisively, "I certainly would," whereupon I secured the services of R. J. Donovan, Commissioner of Deeds of New York, who was a tourist in Stratford, to draw up the following remarkable document:

"Aug. 4, 1912.
County of Warwickshire, England.
I, Martin Bird, do hereby certify that I will be ninety years old on my next birthday. I have lived in Stratford-on-Avon seventy years. About thirty years ago I was present when Shakespeare's remains were exposed to view, at which time a stone was moved, a candle was let down and I could see the bones of Shakespeare."

(Signed) "M. B. BIRD."
"Sworn to before me this 4th day of August."

(Signed) "B. J. DONOVAN."
"Witnessed:
(Signed) "SOPHIE I. LOEB."
(Signed) "MARY ROSE."

"In what condition did you find the remains?" I asked.
"In the short time they were exposed to view I could plainly see by the aid of the lighted candle a perfect skeleton. Further," continued Mr. Bird, "the tablets have been handed down to the church and elsewhere by families I have known, and their ancestors before them, so that there is no doubt in my mind that Shakespeare lived here and my word is his plays."

Next I went to the modest little home of John Richardson, the sexton of the church, who is nearly seventy years old and has given the best part of his life in service here. The old man has a fund of information, but is bitterly opposed to the opening of the grave.

"If they did open it," he said, "I think they would find one unusual thing—that the skull of Shakespeare would be huge."

"Why?" I asked.
SKULLS FOUND IN THE CHARNEL HOUSE WERE HUGE.

"Not long ago I opened the charnel house to wall up a certain portion that was becoming displaced. (The charnel house is within a few feet of Shakespeare's tomb and is the depository of many historic bones and skulls that were, at various times, moved in here to make room for other remains.)

"The skulls I saw there were most remarkable, being huge, almost three times the size of those of present day people. I brought one out to show to my assistant and we marvelled at its dimensions, the teeth being in some instances more than an inch in length and as hard as stone. I examined one of the breastplates in the charnel house and it bore the date of nearly five hundred years ago."

"A curious incident occurred at this time," went on the old sexton. "While I was engaged in this work I saw, coming toward me the young woman who is Marie Corelli's constant companion (Marie Corelli, the novelist, lives in this quaint little town). They were wondering around in the churchyard. When she saw what I was doing she gathered up her skirts and ran away. Marie Corelli must see this! But I do not believe these things are for the curious. I quickly closed up the opening to the discomfiture and disappointment of Miss Corelli."

"Yes, and I will tell you something else," he almost whispered. "There is an old grave of a sister of Shakespeare in the churchyard where I have purposely allowed the soil to grow over the inscription so as to keep away the



curious who would spoil my graves in that vicinity."
"Was she buried before or after Shakespeare?" I asked.
"After the poet," he answered; "since the grown-over inscription says 'sister of the immortal Shakespeare.' This grave would be of particular interest to the tourists here," continued Mr. Richardson, "but everything around it would be trampled down if I did not let the soil grow over it."

"Of course, you mean the American tourists," I suggested, since the majority of visitors to Stratford are from the States.
"Yes, and they are a knowing lot," he answered, humorously. "They want to know—too much."

"But don't you think, Mr. Richardson, in your zeal to cover up this grave you are keeping many Shakespeare students in the dark? If she died after the poet, perhaps there might be something in her tomb to tell the tale."

"What, dig up those bones?" he cried. "Not much! How would you like your bones dug up after 300 years?"

BELIEVES THERE ARE NO MANUSCRIPTS IN GRAVE.

I then talked to the younger sexton, the assistant, Alexander Tomkins, and it seems that he has been digging up some things on his own accord in the last few days. He has been going over the old register containing the entries of baptism and burial of Shakespeare. I asked him what he found.

"I found, at least seemingly," he answered, "another direct proof that Shakespeare as a writer was not widely known at the time of his demise and that therefore if they did dig up the grave no manuscripts would be found, and personally I think it would hurt the cause of our city if such a thing were done."

"Going over the register I found that the parish clerk, Thomas Mickmore in 1642, a few years after the burial of the bard, had noted that there were many visitors to the grave of the poet and interest manifested itself in the family as well. There fore he proceeded to mark a cross after the names of all the connections of Shakespeare in the register to facilitate matters on the curious and that he might not be bothered with questions."

I looked over the register, found the crosses and everything as the sexton had said. The entry of Shakespeare is made as follows:
"April 25, Gulielmus, filius Johannes Shakespeare."

Since Shakespeare was born April 23, this explained to me that this date April 25 was the date of baptism. "So you see," observed the young sexton, "there is no question in the minds of the Stratford people that the bones of Shakespeare are right in this church."

The vicar, Rev. George Arbuthnot, M. A., is loud in his protest. He says: "The most interesting grave in that of Susanna, the poet's elder daughter and the wife of Dr. John Hall, because the lines on it distinctly assert the genius or gift of the poet, and so provide a little additional argument against the theory of the Baconians. They run thus:

"Witty above her sex, but that's not all, Who's salvation was good Mistris Hall. Something of Shakespeare was in that, But this Whole of him with whom she's now in bliss."

Then, passenger, hast'ner a tear, To weep with her that wept with all? That wept, yet set herself to chide Them up wall live, her mercy spread. When thou hast ne'er a tear to shed, And there you are!"

POLICEMAN GETS PAIR HOLDING UP WOMAN.

Complimented by Court for Trail- ing Highwaymen to Catch Them in Robbery Act.

"If the average policeman and detective showed as much intelligence in his work as you have done," Magistrate House said to Patrolman William Flannery in the West Side Court today, "there would be fewer robberies and other crimes in New York. Your superiors should compliment you, too."

Flannery early to-day was on his post on Seventh avenue, near Thirty-ninth street. He saw a woman, who appeared to have been drinking, accompanied by a man. They turned into the opposite side of the street. In front of No. 23 the man and woman stopped and another man came up. One held the woman while the other took an envelope containing \$1 from her waist. Flannery ran over and captured both men.

The woman said she was Mrs. Mary E. Green of No. 25 West One Hundred and Thirty-eighth street. The men were Thomas Sullivan and Joseph McCabe. They refused to give their addresses. Mrs. Green said one of the men was a common acquaintance who had volunteered to escort her to the elevated station.

POLICE BATTLE MOB OF STRIKERS ON FIFTH AVENUE; WOMEN HELD

Shoppers Are Thrown Into Panic as Riot Follows Attack on Strikebreakers.

Clubs were used, revolvers drawn and the reserves from the West Thirtieth police station called out this morning to quell a riot on Fifth avenue between Thirty-fourth and Thirty-fifth streets, resulting from the furriers strike, which has been on since July 31. Traffic on the avenue was suspended for twenty minutes, the crowd swelling into a shrieking, howling, fighting mob, clamoring for the blood of two guards of strikebreakers.

Two retired lieutenants of police, Brown and Beaser, have been in the employ of A. Jackel, a firm of furriers on the avenue, to escort the strikebreakers from the elevated road to the store. Brown was on the avenue near Thirty-fourth street with two girls and a named David Altman of No. 36 East Fifty-sixth street, spat in the face of Brown and two of the girls. Then he yelled "Shoot" at the girls and turned loose a flood of billingsgate at the guard.

Brown promptly grabbed him and about 200 men and women broke in on them. They kicked and beat and clawed Brown. He fought back, and when he could he drew his gun, but was afraid to shoot. Policeman Kobler broke through the crowd, swinging his nightstick right and left. Benson, a little way back, having his troubles with another set of strikers, and was using his club freely. Finally the policemen and the two guards got together and held their own.

The reserves were called out from the West Thirtieth street station and their clubs cleared the avenue. It was during the shopping hour on the avenue and the riot was intensified by the jam of automobiles along the sidewalk's edge. Women screamed at the sight of Brown's revolver and some of the shoppers were reduced to hysterics. It was twenty minutes before traffic was restored to normal.

Seven prisoners were hauled before Magistrate Breen in the Yorkville police court. Altman, who started the riot, was held on \$500 bail pending examination to-morrow. Thomas Brown of No. 43 East Fourteenth street, and Nellie Lannan of No. 45 East Sixth street were fined \$1 each for attempting to take Altman away from the officers. The other four were dismissed with reprimands.

WING FAMILY GATHERS
Relatives From All Over World at Reunion in Chicago.

CHICAGO, Aug. 25.—The eighth annual reunion of the Wing family of America, incorporated, began here to-day and will continue until Friday. Members of the family are in Chicago from many parts of the world. The organization is composed of descendants of John and Deborah Wing and numbers more than 10,000 in the United States alone.

Rev. John Wing died in London in 1684 and two years later his widow came to America and settled in Massachusetts with her two sons, Stephen and John. This is the first reunion ever held west of the Allegheny Mountains. George W. Wing of Kewanee, Wis., is President.

One Party is for W. H. T. But the Tea for all Parties

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BEVERLY JOLTED AS TAFT ARRIVED; HAD FEAR OF HARM

Torpedo Set Off on Railroad Tracks Started Story of Shot Having Been Fired.

BEVERLY, Mass., Aug. 25.—President Taft eluded a crowd of five hundred which gathered at the local railroad station to-day to welcome him to the summer capital by motoring across country from Boston. The crowd, however, got an unlooked for thrill when an enthusiastic railroad man placed a torpedo on the tracks, which was exploded by the train to which the President's private car, minus the President, was attached.

For a time some in the welcoming crowd thought a shot had been fired and the policemen got busy, only to find that the Chief Executive was not on the train.

The President, his brother-in-law, W. C. Herron, his aide, Major Thomas Rhoads, and Assistant Secretary Foster motored direct to the Taft cottage. As soon as he had changed to his golfing caps, the President went to the Myopia links and played a match with his brother-in-law. This afternoon he went motoring with Mrs. Taft. Tomorrow he goes to Columbus, O., to attend the Centennial celebration there.

Executive offices were opened in the building used for Presidential business for the last three summers. Assistant Secretaries Foster and Brachman were both busy at work a few hours after the party reached Beverly. The offices will be kept open probably for six weeks, even when Mr. Taft is away on the short trips now on his schedule. Although he intends to rest as much as possible, the President has several important matters that may be settled before he returns to Washington. It has yet to choose a successor to Dr. Harvey W. Wiley as chief of the Bureau of Chemistry, and it is expected that he will name the members of the industrial commission created by Congress a few weeks ago.

Another puzzling problem that is to be solved soon is the "religious garb order." The President brought the recommendations of Secretary of the Interior Fisher in this matter with him from Washington. At the time he suspended the order of Indian Commissioner Valentine forbidding the wearing of religious garb by teachers in Indian schools, he announced that he would make his decision public in September.

Girl's Plunge Dies of Injuries.
William Gunther, the young man who was badly injured by a trolley car at Springfield early on Monday morning as he was returning from a visit to his fiancée, died in the Jamaica Hospital this morning from shock. His left leg was cut off and his right leg badly crushed. Miss Heston Stoddard of Inwood, to whom Gunther was to have been married in two months, called at the hospital immediately after she learned of the accident and remained with him all night until he died.

MEYER AGAIN SICK; SUFFERS FROM HEAT AND STOMACH TROUBLE
Secretary of Navy at His Summer Home Is Expected to Soon Recover.

HAMILTON, Mass., Aug. 25.—Secretary of the Navy George Von L. Meyer, who arrived at his home here last night, is indisposed as a result of an attack of indigestion before he left Washington. At his home it was stated that the Secretary had not been seriously ill, but that he had felt the effects of the extreme heat in the Capital city.

It is expected that after a few days' rest he will be fully recovered. Secretary Meyer was sick for some time last June with an attack of typhoid fever, but apparently fully recovered and returned to his duties in Washington.

CAR SQUEEZES COP ON POST, LEAVES HIM HURT IN STREET.

While on fixed post at Sixth street and Cooper Square early to-day, Policeman Ballentine Bach was caught between a Ford George surface car and a pillar of the Third avenue "L." He was in Bellevue Hospital with two broken ribs and internal injuries, but the doctors think he will recover.

As the car went on, leaving him on the roadway, Bach crawled to the sidewalk and rapped for assistance. Patrolman Butler found him unconscious and Dr. Waterman took him to the hospital.

Mohrman James Colbert said he thought his was probably the car, but owing to the rumbling of trains overhead and the noise of dumping at an adjacent shaft, nearby, he had not heard the policeman's cries.

Bach, who is twenty-nine and lives at No. 18 Leonard street, Brooklyn, has been in the Department only three months. He is attached to the Fifth street station.

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